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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Phillips County Community College (PCCC) to analyze the impact of freshman orientation classes on students' persistence and academic performance. The participants in the study were all first-time, full-time freshmen who entered PCCC during the fall 1982, spring 1983, or fall 1983 semesters. During the registration process, students were encouraged to enroll in an 8-week orientation class that included information on academic policies, college regulations, career counseling and testing, placement, financial aid, student services, and study skills. Performance and persistence data were analyzed for an experimental group of 337 students who successfully completed the orientation class and for a control group of 433 students who either did not enroll in or did not complete the class. Study findings revealed that: (1) 79.7% of the experimental group had been retained at the end of one semester, compared to 43.1% of the control group; (2) at the end of one academic year, 45.3% of the fall 1982 experimental group had been retained, compared to 23.2% of the control group; (3) the combined first semester mean grade point average for the experimental group was 2.28, compared to 1.72 for the control group. Based on study findings, increased efforts to enroll freshmen in orientation classes, improvement in the consistency of those classes, and promotion of the classes among faculty and staff were recommended. A review of the literature, a bibliography, and the orientation class syllabus are included in the report. (HB)

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Evaluating the Impact Of Freshmen Orientation On Student Persistence And Academic Performance

Applied Educational Research and Evaluation

by

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Dallas II

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ABSTRACT

Evaluating the Impact
Of Freshmen Orientation On Student Persistence
And Academic Performance

Steven Wayne Jones

Recent declines in the number of high school graduates and increases in the number of students with special needs have made it necessary for institutions to revise their enrollment strategies.

Many colleges have reached the point where it has become more cost effective to retain enrolled students than to seek replacements (through expanded marketing activities) for students who have left the institution.

Administrators are realizing that they need to focus existing resources on college-wide approaches to identifying and decreasing student attrition. Public, private, two-year, and four-year colleges alike are all experiencing attrition rates, many averaging between 30% and 60% annually.

Although no specific data exists to support the claims, many have suggested that one component of such an approach should be a student orientation program.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of freshmen orientation on student persistence and academic performance at Phillips County Community College. Two hypotheses that include predictions regarding persistence and

performance were tested using data collected from experimental and control groups.

It was determined that completion of the structured orientation program was a statistically significant factor in increasing both the retention and academic performance of freshmen at Phillips County Community College.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A) Statement of the Problem:

This study was conducted to analyze the impact of freshmen orientation on student persistence and academic performance.

It identifies the relationship that exists between the completion of a structured orientation program (independent variable) and student persistence and academic performance (dependent variables).

B) Research Hypotheses:

It was originally anticipated that the completion of a structured orientation program would significantly increase both student persistence and academic performance among freshmen at Phillips County Community College.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Rising student attrition rates at Phillips County Community College were first noticed in 1978 during an institutional study to identify enrollment patterns. Between 1978 and 1980 the college experienced attrition rates ranging between 38% and 55% for freshmen students.

It was suggested that increasing student retention would not only increase the cost effectiveness of college operations and improve fiscal stability but would also render improved services to students by helping them achieve their educational objectives.

Beginning in 1981, the college began to give activities that might increase student retention a top priority in its enrollment strategies.

Review of Literature

Retention is not a new word in the vocabulary of community college personnel, but few educators in two-year colleges paid much attention to the term until recently. In the late sixties and early seventies, when there seemed to be an endless pool of potential students, there were not many reasons to worry about attrition. However, with enrollments leveling off or declining, it has become clear to many that "keeping" students is at least as important as "attracting" students in the struggle to maintain full-time equivalent students (Zwerling, 1980).

Rapidly rising student attrition has not been a problem unique to Phillips County Community College. Lenning reports that most higher educational institutions have been experiencing increasing student attrition rates ranging from 25% to 50% annually for the past twelve to fifteen years (1980). He points out, however, that two-year public colleges are the most likely to experience the highest and most sustained attrition rates among the nation's colleges and universities.

Like many other institutions, Phillips County Community College has set an objective to identify which students drop out of the college before completing their goals and to

develop programs that will better address those students' needs. The rapidly expanding volume of literature on retention suggests numerous approaches to help identify the demographic variables that may lead students to drop out of college (Astin 1975, Beal and Noel 1980, Cope and Hannah 1975, Chickering 1975, Gardiner 1983, Lenning, Beal and Sauer 1980, Pantages and Creedon 1978).

Unfortunately, attempts to find relationships between those traditional variables and retention have often produced contradictory results. According to Lenning, "the conclusion to be reached from a review of those studies is that little agreement exists" concerning prescribed policies and activities to effectively reduce attrition on our nation's campuses (1977).

These conflicts may be due to the fact that "most of the research done in the area of persistence has been carried out in the laboratory" (Rownd, 1981). Students are not identified and placed into experimental and control groups prior to the dropping out process. As an alternative most studies have relied too heavily on ex post facto methodology.

Rownd completed a major study in 1981 that suggests that such approaches may severely restrict the generalization of research results to wider student populations. This is one possible reason that most retention studies conducted in the past decade have been more descriptive than prescriptive in nature. Very little has been written that prescribes activities that institutions can develop and implement to successfully reduce student attrition.

Rather than invest limited resources in speculative activities that have not been proven effective, most community colleges have simply chosen to talk about student retention rather than develop plans to enhance it. In a survey of the nation's post-secondary institutions, Noel indicates that over 85% of the nation's college presidents are concerned about retention (1980). Yet in a comparable study, Levitz cites that fewer than 10% of these colleges have designed retention plans to address the problem (1980).

With approaches to resolving the retention problem unclear, Keim indicates that many colleges, particularly community colleges, have responded to the challenge in a "Chicken-Little fashion, with a look toward heaven, a shrug of the shoulders, and a pronouncement of doom." She suggests that such an attitude is inappropriate and that "improving retention rates at the community college is difficult but by no means impossible" (Keim, 1981).

Experiences of many colleges that pioneered work in student retention appear to support such a claim. Most notable of such efforts were the experiments conducted by the NORCAL consortium. This group of 23 colleges in northern California conducted a three-year attrition study between 1968 and 1971 seeking to isolate causes for student attrition in California and to develop strategies to improve retention.

Throughout their efforts, the discovery was made that the resources for making a substantial difference in the

retention of students were already available to potential dropouts at the respective campuses (MacMillan and Kester, 1973). Evidence that institutions need to focus existing resources on cost effective methods of addressing this issue is available in other reports as well (Gardiner 1983, Lenning 1980, Pantages 1978, and Smith 1981).

With this philosophy in mind, administrators and faculty at Phillips County Community College set out to plan cost effective activities that would utilize existing resources to reduce student attrition. After considerable debate, it was decided that one of the first programs to be initiated would be a freshman orientation class. A review of available research on this topic indicated that such a program might conceivably have a positive effect on the retention of participants.

In the Fall semester of 1982, a freshman orientation class was established for first-time, full-time students. Existing student services personnel served as instructors. Prior to this research, no in-depth analysis had been completed to determine the impact of this program on the retention or academic performances of the participants.

Few research studies have been conducted to assess the impact that orientation programs have on increased persistence. However, many researchers have prescribed such a program as a possible remedy to the problem (Beal and Noel 1980, Beck 1980, Dey 1979, Everett and Stirn 1979, Faughn 1982, Hershey 1981, Higgins 1979, Jackley 1980, Keim 1981, Lenning 1980, and Sagaria 1980).

In summary, there is a strong indication in the existing literature on retention that freshmen orientation programs should successfuly reduce student attrition. However, before an institution drives headlong into the development of such programs, a word of caution appears in order. Few research studies have actually been conducted to verify such an optimistic assumption.

Definitions

Lenning (1980) has observed that "attrition rate" and other related terms have been variously defined by researchers over the past two decades. Pantages and Creedon (1978) emphasize that "it is extremely important for researchers to reach a consensus in the manner that such terminology is defined." Otherwise, the usefulness of the studies may be limited in that the data will not be comparable due to the fact that "it deals with different phenomena" (Astin, 1975).

For the purpose of this study, retention has been defined as the process of continuing enrollment at the same institution without interruption for the period of study (freshman and sophomore persistence until graduation -- usually two to three years at a community college). Most researchers consider the terms retention and persistence to be synonymous.

Attrition was subsequently defined as leaving the institution before completing an intended educational

objective (completion of a two-year degree program). This included both voluntary and involuntary withdrawal.

The orientation program in this study involved the participation of first-time, full-time students in a one credit hour class that included exposure to academic policies, rules and regulations at the college, career counseling, career interest testing, and information on placement, financial aid, student services, and study skills. Only day sections of the orientation classes were offered. Evening students, who are normally older, more mature, goal-oriented individuals, experienced schedule conflicts which prevented them from enrolling in the orientation programs.

First-time, full-time students were defined as all new students (never enrolled at the college before) who were enrolled in at least twelve (12) credits of coursework.

For the purpose of this study, academic performance was based on cumulative grade point average (the higher the GPA, the better the academic performance). This does not necessarily suggest that high academic achievement is positively related to retention. Although such a correlation normally exists, retention can be affected by many other variables (Pantages, 1978).

Delimitations

No matter how carefully planned and executed, every research project has limitations and weaknesses. It is

impossible to control all of the variables and isolate all of the factors that lead to a student's decision to drop out of college.

The fact that this experiment was conducted at only one college and over a relatively brief period of time restricts the generalization of results to other colleges. In addition, no provisions were taken to adequately account for stopouts, those students who temporarily left the institution only to return for additional study at a later date. These students were included in the drop-out rates since it was impossible to predict with certainty those students who would actually return to the college in the future even if they had expressed intentions to do so.

The study did not account for students who dropped-out of Phillips County Community College and transferred to other institutions to continue their education. Although they have been categorized as attrition statistics at one college they are not true college "drop-outs".

It was also impossible to control variables on the changing degree aspirations of the participants. Many students involved in this analysis may have changed their degree goals during the time frame of this study. Some may have chosen to complete one year programs of study, done so, and left the institution having completed their educational objective. Others might have decided to pursue a two-year degree even though that was not their original intention. Retention statistics in this report have not been adjusted to reflect these events.

Although first-time, full-time students were the target population for this experiment, it may be difficult to project the results of this study and make generalizations to other student groups. One can only speculate if the results generated in the study population will also apply to part-time students. In addition, most students who were full-time students for the first time, but who had previously been enrolled at the college, were not included in the study population.

Basic Assumptions

All first-time, full-time freshmen entering Phillips County Community College during the Fall 1982, Spring 1983, and Fall 1983 semesters were potential participants in this experiment. Students had equal chances of being enrolled in the orientation course; however, due to schedule conflicts, inconsistent advising, schedule changes, and other reasons, many students were not enrolled in the orientation class.

Therefore, the control group of students consisted of students who were not in the class or who did not complete the class. The experimental group consisted of those students who were enrolled in and successfully completed the orientation class. Contamination of the congrol group was highly unlikely.

It was further assumed that there was reasonably high homogeneity among the two groups. Both groups were expected to represent a wide cross section of majors, academic abilities, financial needs, race, sex, and ages.

Since this experiment covered a time frame of three consecutive semesters, it was also assumed that these basic characteristics would be constant throughout the study and that students' motivations to attend college would be basically the same over the 16-month period under review.

It was further assumed that since the class was indeed a basic orientation program and that since grades were primarily based on attendance and participation, that each student would experience basically the same liklihood of successfully completing the course. It was also assumed that the instructional approaches and the concepts covered in each section of the class would be basically consistent even though numerous instructors would be involved.

Finally, it was readily accepted that attrition is a multifaceted phenomenon. Many factors and events are involved in a student's decision to leave a college. Consequently, it was assumed that no single isolated program or activity can be credited with achieving retention.

III. Procedures

Selection of Participants:

The participants in this research project were all first-time, full-time freshmen who entered Phillips County Community College during the Fall 1982, Spring 1983, or Fall 1983 semesters. Orientation classes (SOS 101) have been conducted at the college since 1982, but no data has been collected to determine the impact of the course on retention or academic performance.

Although enrollment in an orientation class has not been mandatory, it has been encouraged. Faculty have been asked to encourage freshmen participation in the course. Most advisers have strongly recommended that their freshmen advisees enroll in the course. Consequently, many freshmen have enrolled in SOS 101 based on their adviser's recommendations.

However, not all faculty perform their advisory duties with equal efficiency. Some have not believed that the orientation classes were worthwhile and therefore have not advised their students to participate. Some students were simply overlooked as first-time freshmen and weren't enrolled in the class. Others had genuine schedule conflicts that prevented them from taking the class. Consequently, many freshmen never enrolled in the orientation course.

Therefore, during the registration process, students were either placed in the orientation class or they were not placed in the class on an essentially random basis.

All participants who successfully completed the orientation class (achieved a passing grade in the course) became members of the experimental group (see appendix for copy of syllabus and final examination). Those students who were not scheduled into the orientation class or who did not successfully complete the class became members of the control group.

It was anticipated that the demographic characteristics of both groups would be very similar. Mean age of both

groups was expected to be between 21-24 and it was expected that there would be equal numbers of whites and non-whites in both groups. Random assignment to one group or the other was expected to produce a control group of roughly equal size to the experimental group.

Data Collection:

Persistence was measured in the following ways:

1. All participants (experimental and control group members) who enrolled in the Fall of 1983 were monitored to identify whether or not they re-enrolled in the Spring of 1984. Retention rates were calculated.
2. All participants who enrolled in the Spring of 1983 were monitored to evaluate their re-enrollment frequencies in both the Fall 1983 and Spring 1984 semesters. Appropriate retention rates were calculated.
3. All participants who enrolled in Fall 1982 were tracked to determine their re-enrollment status for Spring 1983, Fall 1983, and Spring 1984.

These methods allowed an analysis of both the short-term and long-term attrition rates. Enrollment reports from the registrar's office provided all of the needed data.

Academic performance was calculated by determining the mean GPA of both the experimental and control groups. Grade reports of participants were provided by the Vice President for Instruction.

Treatment of the Data

For the purposes of this practicum, two null hypotheses were tested. These were:

1. that completion of a structured, freshman orientation program made no signficant difference in student retention.
2. that completion of a structured, freshman orientation program made no significant difference in academic performance.

To test the first null hypothesis, a z-test for sample proportions was employed and a significance level of .02 was used. This ensured that the maximum probability of making a Type I error (reject Ho when Ha was true) was no greater than 2%. The z value for this upper tail z-test was 2.05.

To test the second null hypothesis, a z-test concerning population means was used. Again a .02 level of signficance was established and a one-tail analysis was conducted. The critical z value for this test was 2.05 as well.

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Most of the basic assumptions were met regarding the characteristics of the experimental and control groups for the Fall 1982 and Fall 1983 entering classes. Table 1 indicates that there were comparable numbers of both males and females and whites and non-whites in both groups. There were slightly more non-whites than white students involved in the study. Unfortunately, the small number of freshmen placed into an orientation class during the Spring 1983 term caused the control group to be disproportionately larger than the experimental group during that term. Given such a small sample size, the statistical test employed to analyze the other classes could not be used to analyze the Spring 1983 data due to a violation of the assumptions for utilizing a z test. The sample size was simply too small for the data during that term to approximate a normal distribution.

Table 1

Experimental and Control Group Characteristics

	Fall 1982		Spring 1983		Fall 1983		Total	
	Exp. (n=172)	Cont. (n=185)	Exp. (n=15)	Cont. (n=93)	Exp. (n=150)	Cont. (n=155)	Exp. (n=337)	Cont. (n=433)
Male	52	86	14	45	114	81	180	212
Female	120	99	1	48	36	74	157	221
Non-White	112	93	8	41	87	81	207	215
White	60	92	7	52	63	74	130	218
Ave. Age	19	22	26	24	20	23	21.8	22.4

However, when the Spring 1983 data was combined with data from the two Fall semesters, the total number of observations was high enough to permit a cumulative analysis for all three semesters. Data is therefore reported for Fall 1982, Fall 1983, and all three semesters combined. (See appendix for formulas and data.)

Short-term Impact on Persistence

Figure 1 illustrates the retention rates of entering freshmen (Fall 1982) for each semester over a two year period.

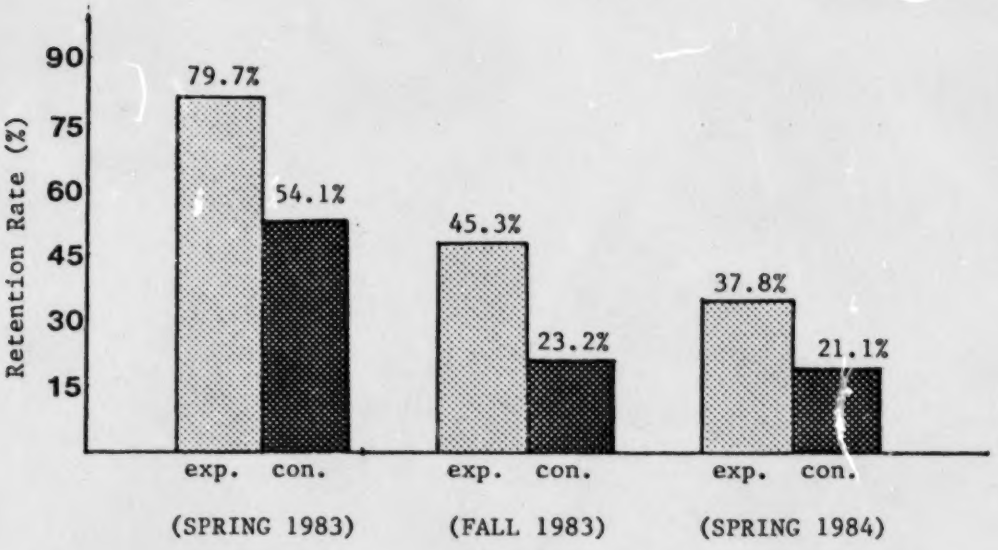

Figure 1

Retention Rates for Research Groups
Over a two Year Period
(Fall 1982 class)

At the end of one semester, 79.7% of the experimental group had been retained compared to 43.1% of the control group. At the end of one academic year, 45.3% of the Fall 1982 experimental group had been retained compared to only 23.2% of the control group. By Spring 1984, sixty-five (37.8%) of the Fall 1982 orientation completers were still enrolled while only 21.1% of the control group was still enrolled. Figure 2 shows that of the 150 freshmen in the Fall 1983 experimental group, 85.3% re-enrolled during Spring 1984 compared to only a 60% retention rate for control group members.

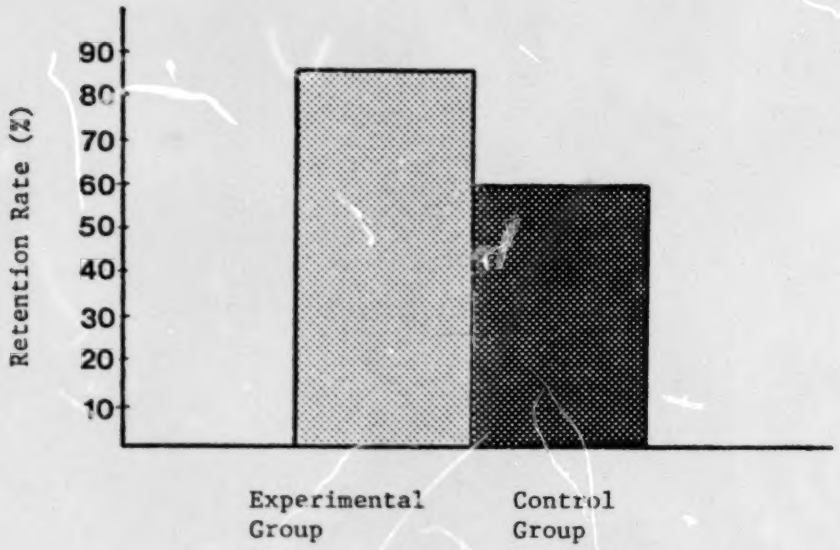

Figure 2
Retention Rates for Research Groups
After One Semester
(Fall 1983 Class)

Statistical significance was measured to determine whether increased retention within the experimental group was a product of the impact of the orientation class or whether

it simply occurred due to chance. For the freshman class entering in Fall 1982, orientation proved to be a statistically significant factor in retention. A calculated z statistic of 5.12 was realized which exceeded the critical z score of 2.05. For the freshman class entering in Fall 1983, the calculated z statistic was 4.94, again exceeding the critical z score of 2.05.

First semester impact was also tested for statistical significance for all three classes combined (Fall 1982, Spring 1983, and Fall 1983). The total number in the experimental group was 337 students compared to a control group of 433 students. Average ages of these combined classes was 21.8 for the experimental group and 22.4 for the control group. Other assumptions about student characteristics were also met (refer to Figure 1).

A calculated z statistic for combined data of 7.77 exceeded the critical z score of 2.05 at the 98% confidence level.

Short-Term Impact on Academic Performance:

Figure 3 illustrates the mean grade point averages of each entering freshman class (experimental and control groups) after one complete semester of enrollment.

The academic performance of the experimental groups exceeded that of the control groups each semester ranging from a mean difference of .41 higher in Fall 1982, to .46 higher in Fall 1983, to 1.03 higher in Spring 1983. All averages are based on a 4.00 grading scale.

For the freshman groups entering PCCC during Fall 1982, the calculated z statistic was 3.29 which exceeded the critical z score of 2.05 at the .02 significance level. For the freshmen entering during Fall 1983, the critical z score of 2.05 was again exceeded. The calculated z statistic for this group was 3.45.

Combining data for all three classes, the first semester mean grade point average for all 336 freshmen in the experimental group was 2.28. The mean GPA of the control group (n=433) was 1.72. This difference was also proven to be statistically significant at the .02 level. The calculated z statistic of 6.67 exceeded the critical z score of 2.05.

Longitudinal Data (long-term impacts)

The data collected enabled an analysis of the impact of orientation completion on the long term retention of freshmen. As indicated in Figure 1, by the beginning of their fourth semester of enrollment at PCCC, the number of new students entering during Fall 1982 (n=332) had declined to 104. Of this total, 65 students were members of the experimental group and 39 were members of the control group.

Testing the significance of these retention rates yielded a calculated z statistic of 3.48 compared to a critical z score of 2.05.

Comparable data (covering four semesters) on academic performance will not be available until May 1984. Long term impact will be assessed at that time.

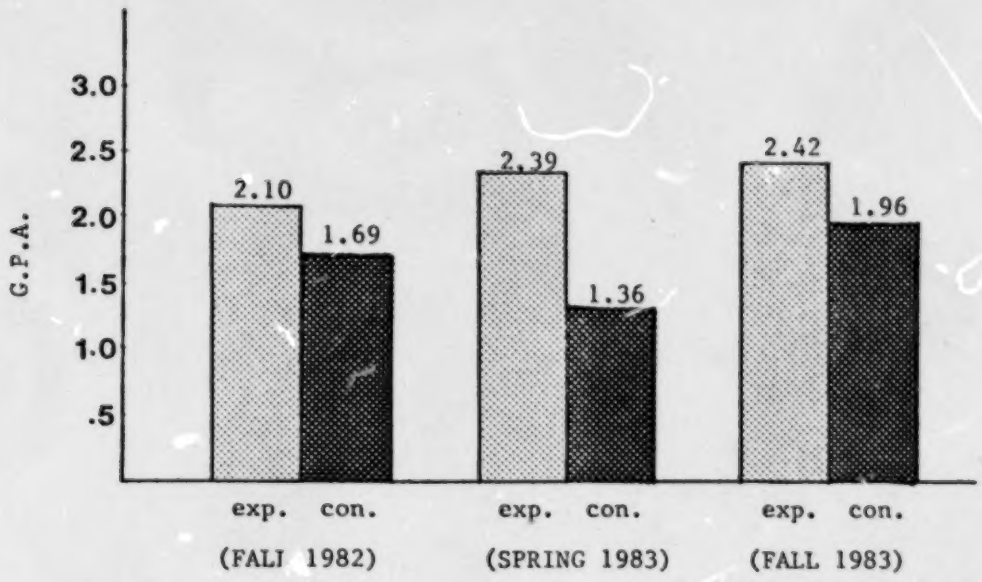

Figure 3

Mean GPA of Research Groups
After One Semester

The statistical significance of these differences was tested (using the data in Table 2) for both the Fall 1982 and Fall 1983 classes. In addition, total impact was tested for all semesters combined.

Table 2

Mean GPA and Standard Deviations
for Research Groups

Class/Group	Group Size	Mean GPA	Standard Deviations
Fall 1982:			
Experimental	n = 172	2.10	.983
Control	n = 185	1.69	1.348
Spring 1983:			
Experimental	n = 15	2.39	1.107
Control	n = 93	1.36	1.283
Fall 1983:			
Experimental	n = 150	2.42	1.068
Control	n = 155	1.96	1.260

V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings indicate that statistically significant differences in both persistence and academic performance were experienced between the two groups of students involved in this study.

These findings lead to the following conclusions about the study:

1. The research findings lead to the rejection of both the null hypotheses.
2. The probability that the difference in persistence and performance existing between these two groups occurred due to chance was only 2%.
3. It can be stated with a high degree of confidence that completion of the orientation class (SOS 101) by those students in the experimental groups was a significant contributor to both their continued enrollment at the college (persistence) and their higher academic performance during the first semester at the college.
4. It can also be stated with a high degree of confidence that completion of the orientation class by freshmen entering PCCC during Fall 1982 was a significant contributor to their persistence throughout their collegiate experience (4 semesters) at the college.

The data confirms, that for those students involved in this study, that completion of the orientation class was a

contributor to both increased persistence and higher academic performance.

From these findings, there is an implication that completion of orientation might also have similar positive impacts on other freshman classes. The data and statistical tests employed imply that students completing SOS 101 will probably experience both increased persistence and higher academic performance.

These findings and conclusions are significant to the institution. They suggest that increasing the number of freshmen who successfully complete the orientation course will have the following consequences: a) increased numbers of returning students each semester, b) increased numbers of students graduating from the institution, c) increased revenues (tuition and formula funding), and d) increased mission attainment by helping more students complete their educational objectives.

Given these findings and recognizing these potential impacts, the following recommendations are made:

1. Increased efforts should be made to enroll more students in freshman orientation: This can be accomplished by standardizing registration procedures for each enrollment period and better identifying first-time, full-time students during the registration process. Requiring expanded accountability from advisers regarding the enrollment of freshmen into the orientation program would also increase the number of students registered in the classes.

2. Increase efforts to assure the consistency of instruction in all orientation classes. Requiring course outlines and reports of classroom activities from all orientation instructors will help ensure that all sections are conducted in a similar fashion and that common topics are covered in each section by each instructor. Student evaluations of the benefits of the class (which include suggestions for course improvement) would also be beneficial to program planning.

3. Promote the significance of the program to faculty and staff. Increasing administrative and department chairperson's efforts to stress the importance of the orientation program to faculty advisors is necessary. Discussion of the significance of the orientation experience on persistence and performance in faculty meetings, departmental meetings, and during adviser training is recommended.

4. Conduct further studies on orientation and retention. Periodic studies of a similar nature should be conducted to monitor the impacts of the orientation program and all other activities designed to improve student retention and/or academic performance at the college.

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Class Syllabus

COURSE TITLE: SOS 101 Student Orientation Session

Your instructor may be reached by telephone (8:00-4:30) by dailing 338-6474, ext. 267.

COURSE GOAL

To communicate information that you will need to function successfully as a student and to be an active participant in the college experience.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a thorough orientation into the college experience, such as:

Using the college catalog	Financial aid available
Understanding educational terms	Courses and programs of study
Rules and regulations	Counseling opportunities
Grading practices	Educational support services available

2. To help stimulate a self-analysis of your commitment to college, and give you an opportunity to assess your attitudes and interests.

3. To investigate a systematic way to identify and explore career opportunities by comparing your interests, aptitudes and personal preferences with others who are successful in college and the world of work.

4. To build a realistic program of study that can relate to your aptitudes and interests.

5. To provide information to help you perform successfully as a student, such as:

Good notetaking	Using the library
How to listen in class	Free tutoring services available
How to study out of class	And other worthwhile hints

6. Toavail yourself of this opportunity to meet and talk freely with important members of the faculty and counselors to resolve specific problems and concerns.

TEXTS USED: The College Catalog
Handout titled: "Academic Regulations and General Information"

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. The class will meet once each week for eight weeks (a semester is approximately 16 weeks in length).

2. Regular class attendance and being on time are required. Excessive absences will result in the lowering of the grade or the loss of credit for the course. The attendance policy: no more than one (1) absence will be allowed. Making up a class absence is encouraged.

3. The balance of the semester (the remaining weeks) could include some or all of the following personal growth and development opportunities.

Individual counseling	Career planning
Academic advising	Skills development

4. One examination (an end-of-course evaluation) will be given. It will be administered the final week and is both objective and subjective.

5. Grading. The final grade will be determined by combining the final end-of-course evaluation with your attendance record.

80 - 100 = A	60 - 59 = C	
70 - 79 = B	50 - 59 = D	Below 50 = F

COURSE OUTLINE

Class 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- 1.1 Purpose of the course
- 1.2 Course requirements and general announcements
- 1.3 Important information you need to know now:
  - 1.3.1 The E Grading Policy (failure for lack of attendance)
  - 1.3.2 Dropping and adding course
  - 1.3.3 Distribution of Handbook titled "Academic Regulations and General Information"

Class 2. HOW TO EXPERIENCE SUCCESS IN COLLEGE
Using the library
Mr. Joe Forte

Review the college's rules and regulations (refer to Handout titled "Academic Regulations and General Information"), including:
- 2.2 Calculating a grade point average
- 2.2 Maintaining successful academic progress

Class 3. Maintaining financial aid eligibility
Becky Collins, Financial Aid

Class 4. IMPROVING SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

"Study Habits and Attitudes." Today you will inventory your study habits and attitudes toward college work. Are you O.K., or do you need help to improve your study habits. You will learn about your strong and weak points and how to be successful in college.

Class 5. IMPROVING SCHOLASTIC PERFORMANCE

How to get the most from your college education

Class 6. USING THE COLLEGE CATALOG

It can serve you well as a "road map" to help you to plan a program of study and select appropriate courses to take.

Class 7. REVIEW

Class 8. WRAP-UP SESSION

8.1 End-of-course evaluation
8.2 Final comments and announcements

Additional opportunities exist for individual class counseling, schedule building for the next semester career exploration, academic advising, etc.

SOS 101
FINAL EXAM

The following questions are taken from the lecture on library use:

1. When using a periodical index to locate information in the library, what information should be written down?

   1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

2. "R" on the index card stands for _____ _____.

3. What system is used for arranging books in the library? The _____

   _____ _____.

4. Does the Phillips County Community College library charge a fine for overdue books? _____Yes or _____No

   This question is taken from the college catalog:

5. What grade point average must be earned to graduate and receive a certificate or an associate degree from Phillips College? _____.

The following questions are taken from Ms. Collins' presentation:

6. Overall eligibility for maintaining satisfactory progress for financial aid is twofold -- semesterly and cumulatively -- to continue to receive student financial aids under the PELL Grant, Supplemental Grant, College Work-Study, and Guaranteed Student Loan Programs. _____True or _____ False

7. Semesterly: Each semester the recipient must complete 50% of courses with a grade of "A", "B", "C", "D", or "F". _____Yes or _____No

8. Cumulatively: Each student must maintain a certain grade point average. _____Yes or _____No

These questions are taken from class discussion.

9. Name three methods of notetaking.

   _____

   _____

   _____

10. What is your college major? _____

11. Who is your advisor? _____

12. The most effective way to collect data is to use index cards. Each card should identify the SOURCE, AUTHOR, _____, _____, and _____ _____.

13. When you are ready to start writing, make sure that you have your _____ _____ and _____ nearby, a good light, and good writing tools.

14. Who is the President of Phillips College? _____

15. One of the best ways to improve your facility with words is to keep a _____ nearby.

The following questions are taken from the "Academic Regulations and General Information" handout:

16. Phillips College, like all colleges, has a grading system. Our system is typical. Fill in the blanks:

GRADE

A means excellent and = _____ grade points
B means _____ and = _____ grade points
C means _____ and = _____ grade points
D means _____ and = _____ grade points
E means _____ and = _____ grade points
F means _____ and = _____ grade points
I means _____ and = _____ grade points

17. What are the four steps you must take in dropping a class?

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3 _____

Step 4 _____

18. Calculate the grade point average:

		GRADE
EMGT	133	D
EH	1013	B
PSY	213	D
PE	111	A
SOS	101	C
DP	114	D

19. Where would you go to get a copy of your PCCC transcript of credits?

20. Is a 2.0 grade point average really a "C" average? _____.

Formulas Used To Test Statistical Significance of Data

A) Retention data: test for significance of the difference between two sample proportions.

1. Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant difference in student retention caused by completion of a structured, freshman orientation class

$$H_o: P_1 = P_2$$

2. Alternative Hypothesis (Ha):

$$Ha: P_1 \neq P_2$$

3. Level of significance set at .02

4. Critical z score = 2.05 (from tables)

5. Calculated z score formula: $$z_c = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\bar{p}\,\bar{q}}{n_1} + \frac{\bar{p}\,\bar{q}}{n_2}}}$$

If zc > z, REJECT NULL HYPOTHESIS

B) Performance data: test for significance of the difference between two means with large sample size.

1. Hypothesis:

There is no significant difference in academic performance caused by completion of a structured orientation class

$$Ho: \bar{x}_1 = \bar{x}_2$$

2. Alternative Hypothesis:

$$Ha: \bar{x}_1 \neq \bar{x}_2$$

3. Level significance set at .02

4. Critical z score = 2.05 (from tables)

5. Calculated z statistic formula: $$zc = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{S_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{S_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

If zc > z, REJECT NULL HYPOTHESIS

Retention Data

1) Students enrolled in Fall 1982 who returned in Spring 1983

R = 79.7%	Experimental	137/172
R = 54.1%	Control	100/185
R = 66.4%		237/357

2) Students enrolled in Fall 1982 who returned in Fall 1983

R = 45.3%	Experimental	78/172
R = 23.2%	Control	43/185
R = 33.9%		121/357

3) Students enrolled in Spring 1983 and returned Fall 1983

R = 53.3%	Experimental	8/15
R = 44.1%	Control	41/93
R = 45.4%		49/108

4) Students enrolled in Fall 1983 who returned Spring 1984

R = 85.3%	Experimental	128/150
R = 60.0%	Control	93/155
R = 72.5%		221/305

5) Students enrolled in Fall 1982 who returned Spring 1984

R = 37.8%	Experimental	65/172
R = 21.1%	Control	39/185
R = 29.1%		104/357

Fall 1982

A) Experimental

		Age
120 female	69.77%	19 years old
52 male	30.23%	
172		3,434 ÷ 172 = 19 yrs.
112 - Black	65.12%	
58 - Caucasian	33.72%	
2 - Hispanic	1.16%	
172		

CUMGPA = 2.10

B) Control

		Age
99 female	53.51%	22 years old
86 male	46.49%	
185		4,138 ÷ 185 = 22 yrs.
90 - Black	48.65%	
92 - Caucasian	49.73%	
1 - Hispanic	.54%	
1 - Amer. Ind.	.54%	
1 - Asian	.54%	
185		

CUMGPA = 1.69

Spring 1983

A) Experimental

		Age
14 female	93.33%	26 years old
1 male	6.67%	
15		400 ÷ 15 = 26 yrs.
7 - Caucasian	46.67%	
1 - Hispanic	6.66%	
1 - Black	46.67%	
15		

CUMGPA = 2.385

B) Control

		Age
48 female	51.61%	24 years old
45 male	48.39%	
93		2,307 ÷ 93 = 24 yrs.
52 - Caucasian	55.91%	
41 - Black	44.09%	
93		

CUMGPA = 1.36

Fall 1983

A) **Experimental**

		Age
114 female	76%	20 years old
36 male	24%	
150		3,085 ÷ 150 = 20 yrs. old
84 Black	56%	
63 Caucasian	42%	
3 Amer. Ind.	2%	
150		

CUMGPA = 2.42

B) **Control**

81 female	52.26%
74 male	47.74%
155	
78 Black	50.32%
74 Caucasian	47.74%
3 American	1.94%
155	

CUMGPA = 1.96

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges
8118 Math-Sciences Building
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

APR 20 1984